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LIKE THUNDER

O for a voice like thunder, and a tongue
To drown the threat of war!

SO WROTE young William Blake in one of his earliest poems when a British Government was threatening war against another nation. It was to be five generations before a body could arise with a voice strong enough to call all the 'peoples and their governments to start immediate negotiations for a just and democratic peace'. One more generation has grown up—and many members of it have died young—since that 'voice like thunder' was first raised on November 8, 1917. Yet read today that Decree of Peace, the first act of the first workers' and peasants' government, and you will find there an answer to every 'peace question': free elections and withdrawal of foreign troops—self-determination of peoples and no forcible annexations—the rights of colonial peoples—an end to secret diplomacy—readiness 'to consider all terms of peace and all proposals'. It is all there. For 37 years that voice has explained to the peoples that there 'lay the path of peace and to socialism'. All that time monstrous Babble Machines have been set to work to 'jam' that message, by churning out lies, distortions, by sheer brute noise. But today the word Peace, Paz, Paix, Pace, Mir, Friede, whatever the tongue, is painted on walls, written on posters, embroidered on banners and, above all, cut deep in the hearts of millions in 'the wilds of Africa', in vast Asia, in the American Continents—and in the prisons of Spain, Portugal, Greece and the Middle East. The very terms used are those of that First Decree, although many perhaps have never even heard of it, and many more have never been allowed to read it openly. This indeed is the month to remember it.

Is Youth a Problem?

ABOVE ALL it is a life or death question for the young. There is, Mr. Eden explains, to be 'full employment'—for juvenile cannon-fodder. The Babble Machine directs its blast against them; but what help do we give them to protect themselves? An experienced trade union branch secretary has strong views about this. Our correspondence began by The Midget being sent to his branch with the special offer to introduce L.M. to the younger trade unionist. He explains why he welcomes this move, and describes the problems today of a branch officer. In every branch there is, he writes, *'a backbone of members steeped in the old tradition of struggle because we lived through an era which compelled us to struggle'*. But besides this backbone there is a large section of younger trade unionists quite unaware of this past, knowing only *'the periodic obtaining of increased wage rates and looking upon a trade union as something you put a coin in one end and get it out again the other end with interest'*. And so a branch officer has an extremely difficult job,

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Notes of the Month

The Stream and the Dam

'Despite it all the masses are on the move and there is no holding them any more. The longer the stream is dammed up the more powerfully will it break through when the moment comes.'

ENGELS, January 11, 1890.

HARD on the heels of the Labour Party Conference at Scarborough and the Conservative Party Conference at Blackpool has followed the strike movement of the London port workers and busmen. Fifty thousand London transport workers (the number at the time of writing) have provided in action their answer to the official decisions and dominant programmes of these Conferences—the answer of the man in the bus-driver's seat or in the hold of the ship or on the quayside, that is, of a sample section of the men on whom Britain depends for existence, and whom Scarborough especially would claim to have voiced. If Mr. Butler's boasts of economic prosperity under Tory rule were justified, how does it come about that tens of thousands of workers in the very metropolis of Tory

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Britain should come out on strike, the majority without even strike pay to sustain them, despite all the money piled up by their union contributions, for very elementary and modest demands on wages and hours? If Mr. Deakin could really claim to represent his million and a quarter members when he held up a piece of cardboard at Scarborough to register four-fifths of a million ghostly voices in favour of Nazi rearmament, how does it come about that he should hold back from meeting his own members in flesh and blood when his union officially summoned them to the central Albert Hall in London to hear the policy he supports, at the height of the crisis occupying the centre of the national stage, and when the subordinate officials to whom he entrusted the task did not venture to submit a resolution for a vote? If Mr. Ernest Jones correctly represented the wishes of the miners as desiring—in startling contrast to their fellows in engineering or on the railways—to see Nazism rearmed, why did he refuse the traditional test of a coalfield ballot on an issue of such importance, which could have made clear the true will of the miners beyond dispute?

Lessons of Scarborough

There is here revealed—and in most dramatic form through the events immediately succeeding Scarborough and Blackpool—a significant gulf between the dominant machinery of the existing political institutions in Britain and the life and action of the people whom they claim to represent. This gulf is most sharply reflected in the present situation in the Labour Party, precisely because the base of the Labour Party is closer to the working people. Therefore the living popular forces within the Labour Party, even though through a distorting medium, are able to make a greater impact, so that at Scarborough the most extreme devices of machine manipulation had to be used to hold them in temporary check. This conflict reached a higher point at Scarborough than at any preceding Conference. Herein, above all, lay the significance of the Scarborough Conference, alike of the actual reactionary decisions reached, though by majorities conspicuously more insecure than of old, and of the portent for the future which was revealed by the advancing strength of the militant sections. The crisis within the Labour Party, seen and recognised by all today, is only the symptom and advance battleground of the gathering deeper crisis of the political situation in Britain. It needs to be seen against a broader canvas than the immediate alignments of the present stage.

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Contrast of Half a Century

Half a century has passed since the foundation of the Labour Party in Britain and the Bolshevik Party in Russia. This month we celebrate the thirty-seventh anniversary of the victory of the socialist revolution in Russia. Nearly two decades have passed since the completion of the construction of socialism throughout the economy of the Soviet Union. The Soviet youth today can only read about capitalists and landlords in books; they have no direct knowledge of them, save for that one terrible impact when the capitalist West broke in upon them in the shape of the Nazi hordes, and they discovered that no description in the books they had read could convey one-hundredth part of the foulness of the reality. Having survived and conquered in that ordeal of war without equal, and having made good in a few years losses of war on a scale never before known, the tried and matured socialist order is now advancing to new triumphs of construction without parallel, at the same time as leading the world in the fight for peace. They can be proud of their record of half a century.

Booming Mammon

In Britain our experience has been different. At the end of half a century of the evolution of the Labour Party we remain tributary to the capitalists and the landlords. Monopoly capitalism is more deeply entrenched than half a century ago. The latest Stock Exchange valuation of shares and stocks shows a total of £30,463 million at current market values. The Church of England has just reported a total property of £211 million (*'lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth'*), including real estate worth £60 million (*'the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head'*), and £136 million of Stock Exchange investments (*'he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions'*), which, with the aid of the guidance of the pious Committee of wise City sharks (*'ye cannot serve God and Mammon'*), have shown an encouraging increase in return during the year from £3 18s. 6d. per cent. to £4 2s. 4d. per cent. (*'lend, hoping for nothing again'*).

Rising Profits versus Rising Real Wages

Gross profits of 2,195 companies for the first nine months of 1954 have risen to £1,349 million against £1,216 million last year. Real wages have fallen, in relation to the steep rise in prices since 1947. A busman today would have to earn £10 7s. a week to get

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the equivalent of his 1938 wage, but gets £7 18s. 6d. On the other hand, the *Daily Herald* of October 16, 1954, reports 'a substantial increase in real wages' in the Soviet Union through the annual reduction in prices since 1947 ('wages are not bad . . . rents are low, varying from about one-twenty-fifth to one-tenth of the tenant's budget . . . everyone gets 19 days holiday a year after 11 months in one job . . . all are covered by social insurance contributions paid by the employers . . . insurance benefits are good'). It is necessary to bear these hard facts in mind, when the leadership of the Labour Party, who have failed to lead the far more favourably placed British working class to the conquest of capitalism, take it upon themselves to adopt a patronising and condescending air to the achievements of socialism in the Soviet Union, won through the leadership of the Communist Party.

A Deeper Contrast

But the contrast goes deeper than the contrast of two social systems, of the victory or defeat of the working class. At the beginning of the century Britain was still the leading capitalist world power. Britain was still the workshop of the world, even though the United States had already wrested manufacturing industrial supremacy. Britain led the world in trade, in finance, in the export of capital, in the command of the seas. Today Britain has fallen to a very much weaker world position, with an increasingly precarious economic base. At the beginning of the century Russia was a weak and backward power, dependent on external capital, with little developed industry, with a population largely illiterate and in conditions of squalor, a crumbling colossus, the weakest of the powers. Today socialism has transformed the old Russia into the first industrial power in Europe, and second only to the United States in the world by the measure of total output (a gap in process of being overcome at the present rate of development), with advanced social and cultural standards, not only of the population of the former ruling Russia, but of the entire 200 millions, including all the nations in former colonial subjection (so that the real comparison should be with the entire British Empire).

A Comparison of Death Rates

Let us take an objective measuring rod of comparison for the change in the relative world position of Russia under socialism and Britain or America under capitalism—the death rate. The death

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rate in any country is always a revealing measure of the stage of social development, living and social standards of the entire population, and social and health organisation. The contrast in the living conditions of a colonial or semi-colonial and an imperialist country is most strikingly illustrated in the wide discrepancy of the death rate (26 per thousand in Egypt, as against 11.4 per thousand in Britain). The same applies to the contrast between the richer and poorer areas or strata of a capitalist country: infantile mortality in Scotland in 1952 was five times as great among the unskilled workers as among the rich. It has this further advantage as a measuring rod, that it is a hard physical fact, which cannot be monkeyed about with by the professional economists of capitalism, who are able to perform such miracles of elaborate manipulation in calculating relative wages and prices to bring out results pleasing to their employers. You cannot play tricks with the death rate. The physical facts are as follows:

DEATH RATES IN LEADING COUNTRIES 1913-53

(*per thousand*)

	U.S.A.	*United Kingdom*	*France*	*U.S.S.R.*
1913 ...	13.8	14.3	17.7	30.2
1927 ...	11.3	12.5	16.5	22.8
1953 ...	9.6	11.4	13.2	8.9

(Report of A. I. Mikoyan to the Supreme Soviet, April 25, 1954.)

In 1913 the death rate of the old Tsarist Russia was at the lowest colonial level, equivalent to India, Egypt or Nigeria, and over double the level of the United States or Britain. By 1953 the death rate in the Soviet Union was the lowest in the world, relegating the United States to second place and Britain to third. A similar contrast could be made in educational provision, and in the proportion of secondary school students and university students to total population.

Socialism and National Independence

But the contrast goes further. Socialism has not only transformed the economic base and social living standards of all the peoples of the former Tsarist Empire from the previous squalid poverty and

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primitive technique to the present foremost advanced standards. Socialism has at the same time established the impregnable national independence, not only of the former subject peoples within the old Tsarist Empire, but of all the peoples of the Soviet Union in relation to the capitalist world. At the beginning of the century Britain, however much the oppressor of other nations, held unassailable sovereign independence as a world power. The old ramshackle Tsarist Empire was the corrupt object of Entente diplomacy, destined to collapse in the stress of war. Today the positions are reversed. In a world of satellites and subsidised dependents of America the almighty dollar is powerless in one sphere. Socialism has established and maintains the unquestioned and unqualified independence of the Soviet Union, together with its allies, in face of the American drive to world domination which has reduced Britain and France to semi-dependent and subordinate status under military occupation. Thus by every measure over half a century the path of socialism has led Russia upwards in the world scale. The path of capitalism has led Britain downwards.

The Labour Party's Lost Opportunity

It is in this context that the present problem of the Labour Party takes its shape and character. For this same half century of Britain's decline has been the half century of the formation and growth of the Labour Party and of its advance to a governmental role and full acceptance as a part of the ruling mechanism of the present capitalist Britain. That the decline of capitalism in Britain should be accompanied by the advancing strength of working-class organisation and of the ideas of socialism was the healthy and inevitable counterpart of the decline, the portent of the future and the evidence of the rise of the new living forces which can alone transform Britain, carry through the indispensable social changes by ending the class monopoly of wealth, and thereby end the decline and restore Britain to its rightful place in the forefront of the advancing progressive nations. Had the Labour Party succeeded to fulfil this role, the history of this half century would have been different.

Apologists of Decline

This role, however, has not so far been fulfilled by the Labour Party. The so far dominant leadership of the Labour Party throughout this entire era up to the present has pursued the alternative policy

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of acquiescing, in the name of evolutionary development, in the capitalist framework, and at best seeking only to wrest reforms and concessions within the framework of a declining capitalism and imperialism. But the laws of the decline have their own logic and consequences, irrespective of the wishes of those who take on themselves to become its administrators. This policy has inevitably turned the dominant leadership of the Labour Party, more and more conspicuously with each stage of development, into participants in and apologists for the decline, a conservative instead of a challenging force, and compelled to demand sacrifices from the workers in the name of the necessities of the decline (the main theme of 'Challenge to Britain'), in place of fighting to change the system. With each turn of the screw this entire policy and leadership becomes more difficult to maintain in face of the deepening of the crisis and the advancing demands of the working class. Herein lies the root of the problem of the Labour Party today.

Marxism and Britain

Marx and Engels showed long ago—and it was the kernel of their teaching in relation to the problems of the labour movement in Britain—that the British capitalist world monopoly since the middle of the 19th century was the cause of the political backwardness of the British working class in the period after the collapse of Chartism. This political backwardness was expressed in the narrow craft outlook of the highly organised (and in economic struggles often militant) skilled aristocracy of labour, their practical unconcern with the mass of the workers in Britain or the subject peoples ruled by Britain, and their acceptance of capitalist leadership in the political field, with the organised labour movement content to follow as the tail of the capitalist Liberal Party. By 1877 the German working class had already registered half a million votes and won 13 seats against the capitalist parties, before there was even the tiniest socialist society in Britain. This was not a question of some innate superiority of German workers over British workers. It was the reflection of different conditions, of the arrested development of capitalist democracy and weakness of liberal capitalism in Germany, and the strength of the British capitalist world industrial supremacy, and of its organ, the Liberal Party, dominating the organised working class in the political field, and utilising the very advance of capitalist democracy to hold the workers in thrall. 'But it remains', as Engels wrote of the results of the 1868 election in the factory

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districts of Manchester and Salford, returning three Tories and two Liberals, while Ernest Jones, with all his long and valiant record in the working-class fight, was nowhere at the bottom of the poll, 'a disastrous certificate of poverty for the English proletariat all the same. Not a single working-class candidate has a ghost of a chance, but my Lord Tumnoddy or any parvenu snob could have the workers' votes with pleasure'. Who said Communists' lost deposits?

The First Break-Through

But Marx and Engels also showed that the inevitable future breakdown of Britain's capitalist world monopoly would bring with it the re-birth of socialism in Britain and the entry of the British working class into the political field, even though a generation behind their continental comrades (just as today the advance to communism develops correspondingly a stage behind in Britain). This prediction began to be fulfilled during the last quarter of the 19th century, with the first weakening of Britain's industrial supremacy, the great depression of the '70s, and the beginnings of the modern socialist movement, still very weak both theoretically and in organisation, and struggling against heavy obstacles, from the '80s onwards. The early socialist movement did not only conduct propaganda for the ideas of socialism. Its most active working-class pioneers conducted a vigorous and polemical campaign (for which they received the most embittered and unscrupulous abuse from the old-established 'Lib.-Lab.' leaders as disruptors, splitters and agents of the enemy) against the 'Lib.-Lab.' tradition of so-called 'labour representatives' ('bourgeois labour representatives', as Marx called them) tamely functioning within the fold of the capitalist Liberal Party, and for an independent political party of the working class directed to the aim of socialism. At the same time they transformed the whole character of trade unionism to reach out to and embrace the unskilled workers, and embodied in the foundation programmes and constitutions of the new unions the principles of the class struggle. It is an irony of history that these militant 'new unions' of the general labourers, founded by the socialist pioneers as the new model of militant trade unionism, should today have been distorted, through a complex process of amalgamation into vast bureaucratically controlled organisations with a considerable violation of democracy in their functioning, into temporary fortresses of the right wing, that is, of the inheritors of the Lib.-Lab. tradition.

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'Inherited Rubbish'

The great change which was begun by the valiant socialist pioneers of the '80s has still to be completed by their successors today. The battle goes ceaselessly forward. The traditions of the socialist pioneers of the '80s are carried forward by the Communist Party today, with the deepened experience of the whole epoch of Marxism-Leninism and its teachings. Engels lived to see the beginnings of the socialist revival and the new unionism. He recognised that the task of the transformation of the British labour movement from the previous acceptance of capitalist politics to the new era of independent class politics and the battle for socialism would be a long and arduous process, requiring ceaseless battle against deeply entrenched traditions of the old era.

> In a country with such an old political and labour movement there is always a tremendous heap of traditionally inherited rubbish which has to be got rid of by degrees.
>
> (Engels. April 19, 1890.)

We have not finished with the 'traditionally inherited rubbish' yet. Scarborough has shown that.

Theory as a Weapon

In the present critical stage of development of the Labour Party, of the advancing left within the trade unions and the Labour Party, and of the Communist Party, it is more than ever necessary to see the present sharp controversies and alignments, not in terms of isolated issues or rival personalities or organisations, but in terms of the long-term historical background of modern socialism and the labour movement in Britain, and the perspective therefrom arising. Not without reason the right-wing leaders seek to warn their followers against the ideas of Marxism, and to deny any theoretical basis for what they are pleased to term 'British Socialism' and turn it into a sentimental mish-mash of vague benevolence, because they know that the theoretical clarity which Marxism alone provides is the indispensable weapon to arm and unite the left, already potentially the majority, and ensure their victory, and therefore the victory of the working class over capitalism and its supporters.

The Line of March

The younger trade unionists and militant members of the Labour Party, who desire the victory of socialism, who are already fighting on the left, and who are angry and disturbed at the right-wing

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policies of surrender to capitalism, of resistance to the fight for higher standards or support of Nazi rearmament, colonial wars and the American tie-up, need to strengthen their equipment for the fight by studying anew the development of socialism and the labour movement in Britain. Only from such a vantage point will they be able to see, not only the present struggle, but the longer line of march; to see where the path went wrong; why we have not yet achieved socialism in Britain; why the right wing is still entrenched; what must be done to achieve victory; and why a Marxist political party of the working class within the broader labour movement is essential for such victory.

A Call to Study

The left is daily growing in strength and consciousness and co-operation. But there is still much to be done to achieve the effective unity which is indispensable in order to end the right-wing domination. Such unity can only be achieved, not only through the experience of co-operation in action, but through common comradely discussion in order to reach a collective outlook on the problems of the labour movement, including on the role of the Communist Party in the common advance of the left and of the whole labour movement. Marxism offers no ready-made formula or solution. But the Marxist approach alone attempts to study seriously the development of the labour movement in Britain in order to chart the path forward. Let them read and re-read such works as *Marx and Engels on Britain* or *Lenin on Britain*, for the light these can throw on current problems.* Let them examine such recent publications as Henry Pelling's *Origins of the Labour Party*,† which, although no Marxist study and written from the standpoint of an Oxford don engaged in scholarly research with a mildly Fabian outlook, nevertheless compiles together valuable material on the early socialist movement and the foundation of the Labour Party not otherwise easily accessible in a single book. We are the inheritors of a battle which has developed over seven decades to win the organised working class from subservience to capitalist politics and for independent class politics and socialism. It is this battle which is reaching a new high point in the present alignments of the left and the right within the Labour Party and the trade unions.

**Marx and Engels on Britain* is available. Lawrence & Wishart, 1954. 7s. 6d.

†Henry Pelling, *Origins of the Labour Party*. Methuen, 1954. 21s.

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Socialism and Labour

The conception of the Labour Party, to constitute an alliance of socialist organisations with the mass organisations of the working class or trade unions, as the appropriate form of advance for the conditions in Britain, was first formulated by Engels. The subsequent realisation has been distorted into a very different outcome today, even to the explicit repudiation of the original proclaimed basis of an alliance of working-class organisations, not because the original conception was at fault, but because the early socialist movement was insufficiently strong and developed to fulfil its role in the alliance. The cardinal emphasis on that role at the outset was shown in the allocation of five seats for the three socialist organisations, alongside seven for the trade unions, on the first Executive—a markedly different relation of forces from today.

Early Socialist Movement

Within the early socialist movement there was considerable confusion and divisions. The emancipation from capitalist politics was by no means complete. Even in the Social Democratic Federation, which was the pioneer (after Marx and Engels) of modern socialism in Britain, and which professed Marxism, though of a very limited kind, the valiant work of its militant membership was counteracted by the dominant role (largely through the power of the purse) of the wealthy ex-Conservative, Hyndman, despite repeated attempts of the rank and file to displace him. Hyndman had far from cast off the relics of his Conservative origins (he was a Conservative candidate for Marylebone in 1880), and was not inaptly described by Engels as 'an arch-Conservative and extremely chauvinistic'. His subsequent career proved the accuracy of this description, which Pelling oddly enough quotes to prove that Marx and Engels were 'poor judges of character'. On the other hand, in the Independent Labour Party which was founded 10 years later, originally as a first attempt towards a broader alliance on the basis of a loose kind of socialism without doctrines, the dominant role was played by Hardie, who, despite his sincere sentiments and desire to represent the under-dog, while repudiating the class struggle, had by no means cast off the relics of his Liberal background. In 1888 he had originally attempted to be adopted as a Liberal candidate; and as late as 1903 he publicly invited John Morley, the arch-Liberal opponent of state intervention in industry, to become the Leader of the Labour Party. MacDonald was previously a Liberal agent and

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remained close to the Liberals. The Fabians, closely associated with the capitalist class and the state machine, openly advocated 'permeation' of the older parties. The desire of the socialist rank and file for unity might have overcome these vagaries of the leadership; in 1897 a joint referendum of the 6,000 members of the I.L.P. and S.D.F. showed a five-to-one majority for unification into a single socialist party; but the manoeuvres of Hardie and the I.L.P. leadership successfully scotched this.

Two Kinds of Alliance

Thus the early socialist movement was ill-fitted, once the victory had been won at the 1899 Trades Union Congress for the trade unions to enter into alliance with the socialist organisations for independent working-class representation in parliament, to guide the alliance from the old traditional subservience to capitalist politics. While the S.D.F. withdrew after the first year, because they had failed in their premature demand to impose at the outset the principles of socialism and the class struggle on the tender plant of the newly-formed alliance, the I.L.P. and Fabians, who remained, became themselves the vehicles of capitalist influence, to reinforce, in place of combating, the 'Lib.-Lab.' traditions of the reformist trade union bureaucracy. There was no organised Marxist wing as yet to counteract this otherwise inevitable tendency of surrender to capitalist politics. When organised Marxism reached sufficient strength and unity, 20 years later, with the formation of the Communist Party, to be able to play a part, the pro-capitalist leadership was already sufficiently entrenched to be able to repudiate the original basis of a federal alliance of working-class organisations and exclude the Communist Party. Thus what was originally proposed as an alliance of socialism and the economic mass organisations of the working class to represent working-class interests against capitalism, turned into an alliance of the petty bourgeoisie and the reformist trade union bureaucracy, controlling the Labour Party in the interests of capitalist policies against the militant working class.

Transformation of the Labour Party

In this way the independence became a formal independence from the two traditional capitalist parties, but not yet independence from capitalist politics. When the upsurge following the 1905 Revolution in Russia brought the Labour electoral victories in the general election of 1906, the new Parliamentary Labour Party functioned

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in practice as a wing of the Liberal Party. When the first world war brought the downfall of the old Liberal Party, and the 1917 Revolution brought the world socialist upsurge and the recognition of the aim of socialism by the Labour Party in 1918, this was accompanied by parallel measures to strengthen the hold of the right wing: first, the institution of individual membership to permit the entry of middle-class recruits without first becoming members of a socialist society; and later, the transformation of the basis of the Labour Party to exclude the Communist Party and eventually all suspected of co-operating with Communism. Through this transformation the Labour Party peacefully replaced the old Liberal Party as the second governing party of capitalism, alternating with the Conservative Party in the two-party system of the modern capitalist state. New Presbyter became Old Priest writ large.

Two Currents in the Labour Party

This basis could not be, and cannot be stable, so long as the foundation of the Labour Party rests in the economic mass organisations of the working class, recruited on the basis of the class struggle against capitalism irrespective of political doctrines. The doctrines of liberal reformism are in permanent conflict with the class interests and class struggle of the working class. Hence the history of the Labour Party is the history of a continuous battle between the two currents. This battle enlarges in scope and intensity, as the crisis of British capitalism develops and the conflict of interests between decaying capitalism and the politically advancing working class develops. The formation of the Communist Party brought a new element into the situation because it represented the organised expression and leadership of the fight for the alternative policy corresponding to the interests of the whole labour movement and socialism against capitalism. The advance of the Communist Party over this period, from the original 2,000 members recorded at the first census in 1922 to 17,000 in 1939 and 35,000 today, though still desperately short of the urgent needs of the situation, and at the same time with an increasing consolidated influence in industry and in the mass organisations of the working class, is at once the reflection and the driving force of the new currents struggling against the old pro-capitalist machine. The right wing has had to have resort to increasing anti-democratic devices, to deny free choice of representatives, and to endeavour to erect an 'iron curtain' of bans and proscriptions, as the only means to endeavour to main-

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tain its hold and stem the flood. Nevertheless, the battle of the left against the right advances in strength and political clarity and stable support, alike in the trade unions and in the divisional labour parties. This is the battle which reached a new height at the Trades Union Congress at Brighton and at the Labour Party Conference at Scarborough.

Contrast of Brighton and Scarborough

It is impossible not to note the contrast between the Trades Union Congress at Brighton, where Communist trade unionists were able to participate with non-Communists, and the Labour Party Conference at Scarborough, where the same mass organisations were represented, but with the artificial exclusion of Communists. The attempt to operate the 'black circular' principles of the Labour Party in the unions has been defeated in the majority of unions, although still operating in the two general unions and one or two others. Hence the role of Communism in the common fight of the left was manifest at Brighton. The right-wing leadership emerged still in control, but heavily battered and discredited; defeated on a number of issues; by common consent out-matched in debating strength; and confronted with a consistent powerful opposition vote ranging from two to three and a half millions. At the Labour Party Conference the voice of Communism was artificially excluded; while the dissident group on the Executive consented to be gagged, and did not appeal to the Conference for the right to place before the sovereign body of the party the grounds of its dissent. Thus the left battle became a soldiers' battle, with the majority of its leading spokesmen excluded, to leave infinite time for the tirades of the right-wing leadership. On this basis the right-wing leadership was able to claim its hollow victories, and even to appear in the outcome more strongly entrenched (to the obvious relief and satisfaction of the capitalist press), but in the face of a consistent opposition vote never falling below one and a half millions and reaching to three millions, and with a continued and increased overwhelming vote for the representatives of the dissident group on the Executive by the local organisations.

Victory by Fraud

The sharpness of the battle reached, and the desperate manoeuvring to which the right-wing leadership is now reduced, was brought into the limelight of universal attention by the vote on German

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rearmament. It was universally agreed that the mandates of the delegates would have produced a majority against, and that this would have meant a crisis of leadership. In the case of the majority of the unions where there was any consultation of the membership, there was no question of the overwhelming will of the working class against this criminal war measure. Even with the aid of the massed votes of organisations where there had been no question of consulting the membership the right wing could no longer count on a majority. Hence the scales could only be tipped by reversing the votes of particular organisations contrary to the expressed will of the members. This peculiar process received conspicuous expression in the reversal of the vote of the Woodworkers, since the 129,000 votes thus cast were sufficient to turn an overall minority into a majority. What makes this example peculiarly startling is that the unanimous decision of the Woodworkers' Conference was not merely a decision on the principle of German rearmament, but an explicit instruction to their delegation on their vote at the Labour Party Conference. Here is the resolution:

> That this branch condemns the action of the Tory Government to agree to the rearmament of Germany. Further, we are appalled at the decision of the Labour Party to support the Tory Government decision, in defiance of the decisions of the T.U.C. and L.P. Conferences. The danger of a rearmed Germany imperils the peace of the world, and *we request that Conference instruct the Society representatives to the T.U.C. and L.P. Conferences to secure the reversal of this tragic decision,* and an international agreement towards a lasting peace.
>
> Resolution of Everton No. 2 Branch, carried unanimously at the Annual Conference of the Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers, June, 1954.

Clear enough. What price democracy? No wonder *The Times* on the eve of Scarborough warned against the danger of policy being determined by conference decisions as 'a denial of the democratic principle '(September 25). It is so obviously more 'democratic' for a secret huddle of leaders of the two parties—in practice working in close association—to determine the policies which they then impose, first on their parties, and then, through their parties, on the electorate.

Unity of the Left

The fight of the left goes forward, reinforced by the experience of Brighton and Scarborough, and with strengthened confidence in the future. Never has the deepening bankruptcy of the right-wing

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leadership and policy been so conspicuously displayed as by the discreditable manoeuvres to which it has had to have recourse to maintain its hold at Scarborough. The battle over German rearmament and for the living standards of the people goes forward. The domination of the right wing is visibly less secure. The differentiation among the upper leadership has also moved a whole stage forward at Scarborough with the open fight over the election to the Treasurership, and the separation of Mr. Bevan from the Executive in order, according to his announcement, to mobilise the rank and file against right-wing policies. There is no doubt that a further development of the militant movement could bring great and extending changes, when the balance of forces in the labour movement has begun to become so delicate and so close. But there is no room for illusions on the strength of the entrenchment of the right wing in the top machine of the General Council and the Labour Party. The united co-operation of all sections of the left will be necessary in order to win the majority of the working class and bring about the changes that are necessary. The principle of unity of the left is not contrary to the aim of unity of the whole labour movement, but the essential condition for its realisation in order to end surrender to Tory policy and rally the united support of the working class and the people for a positive alternative policy to Toryism.

No War on Two Fronts

From this general consideration three practical maxims may be suggested as of key importance for the present stage of the fight of the left. The first is that a successful struggle against right-wing policy and domination cannot be conducted on the basis of a war on two fronts. A section of those claiming to desire the defeat of the right wing still seek to proclaim such a war on two fronts: on the one hand, against the right wing, and on the other hand, against the considerable body of militant workers, most strongly represented in the key industrial sections decisive for the future of the labour movement, associated with the Communist Party or supporting its policy. Such a suicidal approach only plays into the hands of the right wing, whose object is to disrupt the left. It would reflect, not a serious attempt to unite all forces for the defeat of right-wing policy, but the characteristic outlook of centrism, which may for a time succeed to confuse and divide the left, but in the end can only be ground between the opposing armies. It is common sense that the basis of co-operation must be found between all those who

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sincerely desire an end to the present subservience to Tory capitalist policies. This requires give and take from all sections and a spirit of mutual understanding. Whatever the differences still remaining on ultimate questions, such co-operation on the immediate burning issues can be achieved, and must be achieved, if victory is to be won. Co-operation of Communists and non-Communists in the common fight is the key to success. Such co-operation is fully possible, despite all the bans, in living practice, and can lead the way to the defeat of the undemocratic bans and the strengthening of the unity of the movement.

Fight for a Positive Programme

The second practical maxim follows from the first. Co-operation can only be based on policy. The fight against the present right-wing domination and policies of surrender to capitalism and shadow-boxing with Toryism can only be fought, not on the basis of negative denunciation of leaders, not on the basis of rival personalities or organisations, but on the basis of a positive constructive programme which corresponds to the needs of the labour movement and the people. The bricks and the scaffolding for such a programme already exist in the main current immediate issues which are universally recognised: the fight for higher living standards, against the Tory rents offensive, and against the demand to impose sacrifices on the workers in the name of rearmament and the war policy; the fight to replace the war policy of Nazi rearmament, atomic war and division of the world into opposing armed camps by a positive peace policy for a united democratic Germany not tied to any military bloc, for the banning of atomic and hydrogen weapons, and for co-operation with the Soviet Union and China for collective security for Europe and Asia; the fight against the colonial wars, with the consequent two years' conscription, and for the right of independence of the colonial peoples: and many similar issues widely recognised by the most diverse sections of the left. The Communist Party at its 23rd Congress put forward its proposals for such a Common Programme. What is important is not the particular proposition of one section or one organisation: but that all sections should hammer out together and in consultation such a common programme, in order that it may become the basis of a combined, collective, sustained and powerful campaign to win the majority of the working-class movement.

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The Mass Movement and the Left

The third practical maxim is the most important. The mass membership of the great organisations decisive for the labour movement can only be mobilised and brought into action for a fighting militant policy of the left to the extent that that policy expresses and takes up and actively fights for the mass issues of their daily struggle, and does not remain in a remote rarified parliamentary vacuum artificially separated from their daily life and struggle. It is not possible to speak of a mass fight against Tory and right-wing policy, and simultaneously support the increase of rents. It is not possible to speak of mobilising the rank and file of the great trade unions against right-wing domination, and simultaneously proclaim aloofness from the fight of these same millions for increased wages. There can be no separation of political issues from bread and butter issues; they are part of a common battle. Only on such a basis can the left grow and become strong, unconquerably rooted in the key industrial sections of the working class and in the trade unions that are able to wield decisive power in the Labour Party, at the same time as among the tenants, the housewives, the youth and all sections of the people. We come back to where we began: from Scarborough and Brighton to the port workers and the busmen: from the battle of the representatives against a machine which was originally devised to serve the workers, but which has fallen into hands operating it against the interests of the workers, to the living action of the working people, who by their strength and unity can and will also master and re-mould that machine to serve their ends and assist to organise their victory. The more actively that fight is carried forward, the sooner will the day dawn when the working people of Britain will take their country into their own hands and re-mould it anew to build their glorious socialist future.

October 18, 1954. R.P.D.

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LABOUR WANTS SOCIALISM

ROLAND W. CASASOLA*

THE most outstanding impression which Labour's 53rd annual conference at Scarborough (September 27-October 1) left on my mind was one of the still increasing militancy and Socialist maturity of the rank and file. This seems like a swelling tide, rising irresistibly from year to year—and when I say 'Socialist' I mean what the pioneers of the '80s and '90s would have recognised as such, not the poorly disguised Liberal doctrine of gently but firmly co-operating with the capitalist class, so often served up to us from the platform.

A number of incidents spring to my mind which brought out this Socialist spirit. On Monday, the applause that greeted Reynolds (Kingston-upon-Hull) when, moving the resolution for more delegations abroad including 50 per cent. rank and file members, he said: 'Let worker speak to worker, rank and filer to rank and filer'. The ovation with which Conference responded to Harold Davies', M.P. (Leek), closing words, in moving the composite resolution opposing SEATO as anti-Chinese: 'Let us be Socialists, and vote for a Socialist foreign policy!' The renewal of these cheers when Jennie Lee, M.P., supporting him closed with the same words. The great applause when John Burns, moving for the Fire Brigades' Union another composite resolution rejecting any regional pact in South-East Asia which does not include China and India, reminded Conference of the 'rotten, corrupt régime' of Chiang Kai-Shek which the Americans are trying to force on the Chinese people, and added: 'As Socialists we have a responsibility which we cannot evade'. Messer (Croydon) saying that the Labour Party must press the demand for a Three-Power meeting to ban atomic weapons and cut armaments, because 'it is a question of co-existence or no existence'. The tremendous cheering that greeted a speaker when he announced himself as 'Stringer, Coventry C.L.P.'—for everyone knew the great lead for a Socialist foreign policy against atomic mania given by our hero-city, in spite of Herbert Morrison's attack on it. The hard-hitting denunciation by Finch (Smallheath, Birmingham) of SEATO as an 'anti-colonial pact', proved by India, Burma, Ceylon, Indonesia refusing to have any truck with it. The strong protests, at the

*Mr. Casasola, as many of our readers will know, is President of the Amalgamated Union of Foundry Workers. When he moved the composite resolution against German rearmament at the Labour Party Conference the *Forward* reporter noted: 'The thunderous ovation which greeted him as he stepped down from the rostrum was the loudest and most sustained of the week'.

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end of the first day's proceedings, when Jack Tanner attempted to use his fraternal address as T.U.C. delegate to do propaganda for German rearmament.

On Tuesday, the deeply moving ovation with which Conference responded to my speech proposing the composite resolution against German rearmament, in which I tried to show that there was an alternative policy—pointed out by the successful Geneva Conference—and that I could not understand, having been bred in the Labour movement, 'why it should now be asked to arm capitalism'. The no less tremendous ovation which greeted the fine speech by Ben Parkin, M.P., supporting the resolution, in which he rightly declared—anent the neo-Nazis rising in West Germany: 'We in the Labour movement have been getting steadily into worse and worse company'. Alan Birch (U.S.D.A.W.) asking a hushed Conference what 'flexibility' and what negotiations could be expected when the two Germanies engaged in a miniature arms race? The uproar aroused by Ernest Jones (Miners) when he tried to excite prejudice by saying that opponents of German rearmament held 'the point of view of the Cominform': and the tremendous cheering when Lewis (Sutton and Cheam), after trouncing Jones, quoted John Maclean: 'I am a member of the Socialist Army. God damn every other army!' The terrific and most revealing demonstration which drowned Desmond Donnelly, M.P., and forced him off the rostrum, when he tried to cover up his change of mind on German rearmament by a cheap personal attack on Aneurin Bevan.

On Wednesday—colonial day—the first applause with which Conference rewarded Padley (U.S.D.A.W.) for his reference to the 'tortured land' of Kenya and his demand that the rights of 5½ million Africans should take precedence over those of 35,000 white settlers: and Chapel (Exeter) when he declared that the Labour Government's treatment of Seretse Khama in Bechuanaland was 'nothing to be proud of'. Mrs. Hall (Heston and Isleworth) boldly saying it was 'nonsense to describe the Kenya and Malaya uprisings as the mere consequence of Communist propaganda', and going on with the much-needed reminder: 'It must be obvious by now that a small band of terrorists in Malaya could not have held out so long against all the might of Britain if they had not enjoyed the convinced support of the majority of their people'. The sharp, unsparing points made by Van Gelderen (Richmond and Barnes) to a silent, shamefaced Conference, without a word of opposition: 'The colonial peoples are looking for more than "broad principles". They don't

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want to wait for "orderly progress": they want to choose for themselves. . . . When in 1945 we found that Malaya produced dollars which we wanted, we decided that Malaya should not share the freedom we gave to India. . . . Kenyatta and Jagan enjoy the confidence of their people. They are in jail. Nehru has been in jail too. Kenyatta and Jagan will be leaders, with or without our help. . . . During the war we praised the resistance movements in Europe. Now we are condemning the people of Kenya and Malaya who are resisting the armed forces occupying their country'. Blair (E.T.U.) supporting for his Union the resolution demanding 'the immediate withdrawal of all British troops' from the colonies, exposing the horrors of repression in Malaya and scornfully dismissing the lying charges against the Jagan Government in British Guiana—their reforms, he said amid applause, were 'as much a Red plot as the Beveridge Report'.

Indeed such statements made a heartening contrast to the official statement full of ambiguous promises to the colonial peoples—with some vicious attacks on the patriots suffering British persecution in Kenya, Malaya and British Guiana—which the big union block votes were still able to steamroller through (and I say 'still' advisedly, because hasty conclusions on the spirit of the rank and file should not be drawn from the results of this first full-length debate in the Labour Party's history on the real issues in the colonies. (At Margate last year the colonial resolutions were simply swept aside on the last day, in the usual fashion.)

It is an indisputable fact that this new Socialist spirit is now widespread in our movement. At the Conference it found the most practical expression in what has come to be recognised as a fighting alliance between affiliated trade unions where left-wing influence is strong, and the substantial majority—perhaps about two-thirds—of the 667 constituency parties. This alliance is by no means at its most effective—there were occasions when it was caught napping during the Scarborough Conference (as for example when it accepted without a vote the remitting to the E.C. of the Engineers' resolution, and others, calling for a cut in the call-up)—yet it did achieve some unquestionable successes.

To begin with, the strong feelings voiced for months beforehand secured acceptance by the N.E.C., not only of the E.T.U. resolution calling for an early meeting of heads of Governments of the U.S.A., U.S.S.R. and U.K. 'to remove by negotiation all outstanding differences' but also of the composite resolution demanding that they

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should meet to consider 'reduction and control of armaments, banning of all atomic and hydrogen weapons, and the strengthening of collective peace through U.N.O.' The rank and file also won acceptance by the N.E.C., through Edith Summerskill, M.P., that 'Challenge to Britain', the Party's programme for the next election, will be amended to provide that basic pensions and benefits will be increased to restore their value as it stood in 1946.

Secondly, the average vote secured by the alliance of trade unions and constituency parties for a Socialist policy, whenever it was defeated in a card vote, marked a new and significant advance. At Morecambe, in 1952, the average over four card votes was under 1,500,000—25 per cent. of the total represented. At Margate last year it went up (over nine votes) to just over 1,750,000—nearly 29 per cent. At Scarborough it was (in seven votes) 2,400,000, nearly 40 per cent. of the total. These figures show how left-wing feeling is rising in the trade unions: and how a comparatively small advance of clear-cut Socialist policy in one or two large trade unions would completely change the picture of right-wing domination at the Labour Party Conference.

This of course was shown above all in the voting on German rearmament. If ever a minority gained a moral victory, it was when the opposition to the N.E.C. resolution secured 3,022,000 votes against 3,270,000. Not only because the majority included bulk votes secured by strange means—one great organisation, for example, actually refusing by majority decision on its E.C. to ballot its members on the subject. I will not go further into this, except to say that I do not envy the delegates of one highly respected union who have the job of explaining to their members why they not only defied the express decision of their annual conference, but by doing so turned a real majority against German rearmament into one for it! But even more important than these voting manoeuvres were the political insincerities to which the N.E.C. majority had to resort. Among such I class the repeated assertion that the U.S.S.R. is against free elections in Germany—a flagrant untruth: unless we accept that black means white, and that elections controlled by foreign troops and under laws devised by foreigners are free, while elections controlled by the Germans of both sides themselves, under laws devised by agreement between the two parts of Germany, are fettered. Equally reprehensible was the attempt to conceal the plain, staring fact that the German Social Democrats and trade union movement—our colleagues in the Socialist International—

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are against the plan for rearmament before negotiation which the N.E.C. sponsored (and which the Tory Government has now adopted). No less significant was the hushing up of the 50-50 division of the French Socialists in Parliament on the question: and of the Soviet plan for security for all countries of Europe, which at any rate provided the basis of discussion for an alternative settlement.

Nevertheless—and in spite of the attempts of the capitalist press to proclaim a final and overwhelming victory for the N.E.C.—the fight on this question will go on, because the British working class has been too long in the political field to allow its opinions to be stolen from it, or misrepresented in order to bolster up Mr. Eden in the serious new situation created by the agreement to rearm Western Germany which was adopted by the Nine-Power Conference sitting in London, less than 48 hours after the Scarborough Conference ended. The same applies to the whole opposition to the non-Socialist policies at present prevailing in the National Executive. In this connection one could have wished that some of the Bevanite leaders, in the Conference and at their packed and enthusiastic meeting on September 29, had shown less concern to underline that the Executive is not so effective a bulwark against Communism as they are (the argument used to the point of absurdity by Joan Richardson, when moving the reference back of the E.C. report on British Guiana), and a little more readiness to come down from the platform to challenge their Executive colleagues, as often happens at the T.U.C. It was argued that this was not permitted to E.C. members. But there are no standing orders against it, Conference is the supreme body while in session, and on a matter of conscience and profound conviction Conference has always upheld the right of any delegate to voice his convictions. It is to be hoped that experiences at Scarborough will have made some impression in this respect.

In conclusion I would say that Scarborough marks a new and higher stage in the struggle for Socialism in Britain. The issues were clearer, and the case for a Socialist policy put more sharply than for many years past. We must never forget that the real enemy of the workers is the capitalist class; and that before next year's Conference comes round many a struggle for wages, against higher rents, and rising living costs, for peace and trade with all countries, for colonial freedom—and maybe a General Election—will have been fought. Let us all see to it in the coming 12 months that the

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record of these struggles is a bright and worthy one, in keeping with true Socialist tradition. Then the inspiration gained at Scarborough will be reflected more strongly still at the next Conference, and the Red Flag which we all stood and sang on October 1, in the Spa Grand Hall, will really be hoisted to the masthead of the British Labour movement.

GERMANY : THE WEB OF LIES

GORDON SCHAFFER

WITHIN a couple of weeks of the frantic manoeuvres at Scarborough to secure a paper victory for West German re-armament, two of the principal arguments of the right-wing leaders have been blown sky high. Mr. Attlee pleads with the Conference to re-create the Wehrmacht so as to relieve British boys of the task of 'defending' Europe. The very same week, Mr. Eden promises to keep British boys in Europe for the rest of the century so as to re-assure French fears of new German aggression. Mr. Morrison declares that West German socialists back his policy. A few days later Herr Ollenauer, German Social-Democratic leader, virtually endorses the case put by the opponents of German re-armament at Scarborough. Soon afterwards, the youth section of the West German T.U.C. repudiates re-armament, and the German T.U.C. follows suit, thereby not only repudiating Mr. Morrison, but Sir Vincent Tewson as well, for Sir Vincent pleaded at Brighton that the West German democrats would be insulted and offended if they were refused the opportunity to re-arm.

But the debates on German re-armament at Brighton and Scarborough were not staged to decide whether the Nazi Generals should have arms. The British government was already committed to the policy, and the 'victory' of the right-wing leaders, far from strengthening the hands of Mr. Dulles and Mr. Eden, proved to the world that in reality the majority of the British working class opposes their policy. The debates were staged, and the block votes manipulated because West German re-armament is the lynch pin of the anti-Soviet alliance, and the coalition in Britain behind the policy of cold war. In other sectors of the world front, the coalition has had to give ground, even at the cost of angering Mr. Dulles. Neither the Tory nor the Labour leaders dared follow Mr. Dulles

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into war in Indo-China. Both are alarmed at the possibility of the China Lobby and Chiang Kai-shek and Syngman Rhee precipitating war over Formosa. Both agree that the time has come to defy some at least of the American embargoes on trade with the socialist world.

Mr. Attlee, through the visit of the Labour delegation to the Soviet Union and China, held the initiative. Had he followed up his condemnation of the United States' threats in the Far East, and his declaration in favour of friendship with China with a demand for a full policy of peace and friendship, he would have ensured a Labour victory at the election, and mobilised the working class with an enthusiasm like that of 1945. But that would have meant calling for a genuinely united Germany, and the unity, instead of the division, of Europe. It would have meant re-tracing the steps of the Labour Party to that disastrous moment when the Labour government refused to repudiate Churchill's 1946 Fulton speech, and took the path of cold war. It would have meant repudiating the anti-Soviet alliance, and the past, of most of the Labour leaders.

That was why the theme of all the speeches in favour of West German alliance both at Brighton and Scarborough was anti-Sovietism and fear that without American and West German forces to hold them down, the peoples of Europe might take the path of social revolution. Sir Vincent Tewson said that our freedoms were in danger, and that West Germany must join in their defence. Mr. Attlee talked of dangers to West Germany from without, and dangers of a putsch from within. Mr. Morrison made even his supporters laugh, by his talk of Soviet V 1s and V 2s, bombarding Scotland from the Straits of Dover. And at the Conservative Conference, Mr. Eden talked about Germany 'being driven along dark and dangerous paths', and Sir Winston Churchill trembled at the thought that, but for the Americans the Soviet Union could overrun Europe.

The cold war policy, and its counterpart of hatred of the Soviet Union has been built up ever since 1946 on a policy of lies—lies repeated so often, and with such assurance—that millions of honest, sincere people believe them. Most of them came out again in the Scarborough debate. Said Mr. Attlee, 'The Russians divided Europe and attempted to starve Berlin. That was what led to the North Atlantic Treaty Alliance'.

The facts are that the final division of Germany in the summer of 1948 was caused by the American action in ordering unilateral

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currency reform in the Western zones at a moment when the four powers had virtually reached agreement on an *all-German* currency reform. The Russians were forced to take measures to prevent the security of their zone from being disrupted, and the Western powers retorted with the air lift. During that period, Mr. Dulles in a speech in Paris said plainly that the air lift must not be called off until the countries of Western Europe agreed to the necessary measures of re-armament. That is the real story of how NATO was born.

The answer to the story that the Russians attempted to starve Berlin was given by the pro-State Department American journalist, Drew Middleton, who in his book, *Struggle for Germany* (page 238), wrote, 'It would not have mattered how many tons of food and coal the American and British fliers were able to bring into the city over the Russian blockade, if the Berliners themselves had not resisted the Soviet and German Communist inducements to be fed by the Eastern Sector of the city'.

Sir Vincent Tewson, Mr. Attlee, and Mr. Morrison, all made maximum play with the statement that Eastern Germany was already re-armed. There were delegates at Scarborough who had recently returned from the German Democratic Republic, and who could have denied this statement had they caught the chairman's eye. But in any case the fact has been put on record a hundred times that the government of the German Democratic Republic has offered repeatedly to take part in a joint inspection in both Republics to see whether there is re-armament, and to test the size of the police forces on both sides. Mr. Molotov repeated the offer at the Berlin Conference, and when Mr. Eden was asked in the House of Commons why the offer was not accepted, he could only reply lamely, that Dr. Adenauer refused to meet representatives from Eastern Germany.

The allegation that the Russians refused free elections was repeated endlessly. Again the facts are indisputable. The Russian standpoint has been that until foreign troops are withdrawn from Germany all talk of 'free elections' is a mere deception: and accordingly they have pressed for the withdrawal of all foreign armies. Furthermore their standpoint has been that the two governments in Germany should get together and work out plans for elections: and they have even gone so far as to suggest these should be carried out under the pre-Hitler Weimar Constitution. It is the

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Western Powers who have demanded that the elections should be conducted under foreign military occupation and foreign control.

The truth is that the Americans are determined to perpetuate the division of Germany by re-arming the Nazi Generals because four-power agreement on a united Germany would be the first step towards ending the division of Europe and halting the cold war. They have no use for a united Germany unless it revises the social changes made in the German Democratic Republic, gives back the land to the Junker landlords and brings the Ruhr arms kings, the Junkers and the new Wehrmacht to the Oder-Neisse line. The support for German re-armament by America's reluctant allies in Europe has nothing to do with defence. No West European government would have dreamed of re-creating German militarism if the instructions had not been given in Washington—whose only other trusted ally in Europe is Franco Spain.

That is why the struggle against West German re-armament in Britain, France, Italy, and in West Germany too, is the focal struggle for peace. For if the plan to re-arm Western Germany is defeated the policy of the cold war alliance will be in ruins. The way will be open to heal the division of Europe, and to forge a collective peace in which Germany can achieve true unity. The German trade unionists understand that a divided Germany would be the first victim if war were to come. The French people know that a West German army would be a threat, and not a defence. The British people are learning that they are being made the victim of a gigantic confidence trick and that their sons and grandsons are committed to pay the price. But they have yet to break through the web of lies, and unite in the demand for an end to the cold war, and the acceptance by their governments of a genuine policy of peace.

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ENOSIS—CYPRUS' ROAD TO FREEDOM

G. PEFKOS

A STRIKING photograph of a young London Cypriot carrying a poster saying 'Five years in prison for any Cypriot who dares say *Enosis*', was published recently on the front page of a British non-Communist newspaper with the following characteristic caption: 'A picture that shames every Briton.' Indeed, the grave decisions taken by the Tory Government in the recent months on the future of Cyprus—decisions taken in the name of the British people—are a menace to the British people as well.

At the end of June, the British Government, ignoring the fact that 100,000 adult inhabitants of Cyprus had signed a peace petition in 1950, and without any consultation of the people of Cyprus, declared that it had decided to transfer the Middle East Command from Egypt to Cyprus. As soon as this became known in Cyprus, the whole people protested to the Governor and Colonial Office.

What does this decision mean for Cyprus? Firstly it means complete destruction for that beautiful island in the event of a new imperialist war: secondly, perpetuation of the colonial status of the island: thirdly, still more poverty, unemployment and rising cost of living owing to the presence of yet more foreign troops there.* Cyprus, like other colonies has no effective industry: the great majority of the population are peasants and small farmers. Already 87,000 acres of fertile land have been confiscated and taken over for military purposes. Despite the resistance of the people it is planned to take over yet more land. Whole villages, led by the village priests in the front line, are demonstrating against this confiscation of land which is forcing thousands of young Cypriot peasants to emigrate to Britain and other parts of the British Empire to seek a livelihood.

In the House of Commons on July 29 Sir Winston Churchill explained that, with the development of the Hydrogen bomb, in any future war, the position of British troops in Egypt would be untenable. A day earlier, the Tory Major Legge-Bourke unwittingly underlined what the decision to transfer the Middle East Command to Cyprus may mean for the people of that island when he said:

*Since this was written, the official cost of living index has shown, in one month alone (September, 1954), a rise of 4.3 points—due, of course, to the transfer of more troops from Egypt to Cyprus. This gives the lie to British official propaganda that the move of the Middle East Command will benefit financially the people of Cyprus.

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> I am quite sure that if the arguments that have been used about H-bombs for removing ourselves from Egypt are applied to Cyprus, the position of Cyprus is thoroughly terrifying.

The Cypriot people have long been aware of these dangers and that is why their demand for Enosis is coupled with the demand that no foreign power shall have the right to military bases on the island.

On July 28, the Minister of State for the Colonies, H. L. d'A. Hopkinson, almost on the eve of the summer recess and without any previous notice to the House, suddenly announced further grave decisions on the future of Cyprus. These decisions shocked and angered not only the people of Cyprus and of Greece but also some of the Labour members who know something of the history and aspirations of the people of Cyprus. Mr. Hopkinson quite cynically declared that: 'They could not contemplate a change in the sovereignty of Cyprus' and that 'certain Commonwealth territories . . . . could never expect to be fully independent'. He also announced that the government had decided, 'to introduce in the near future a modified constitution providing for a legislature containing both official and nominated members—together forming a majority—and elected members'. In other words, the Cypriot people should give up their hopes and aspirations for National Rehabilitation and understand that their future should be based on serving imperialist aims—as long as imperialism exists. These amazing statements—contradicting all the previous assertions that Britain's mission was to educate the colonies until the time when they could rule themselves—were made to meet the Tory caucus' insistence on a declaration that there would be no more withdrawals from terrritories in the Empire or under its domination.

In the heated debate which followed, Mr. Hopkinson expressed the hope that 'enough men of goodwill' would come forward to operate the new constitution. He based his hopes, no doubt, on the systematic efforts of the colonial administration to create a pro-British feeling among the Cypriots by effectively controlling education, prohibiting Greek history and even the Greek national anthem in the schools, promoting teachers on the basis of their knowledge of English whilst dismissing patriotic teachers, granting scholarships to Cypriot students (incidentally forcing others to study in Britain since degrees from other universities are not recognised in Cyprus) and by high wages and salaries for government employees.

Mr. Hopkinson was ignoring the fact that British imperialism is not the first which has endeavoured to destroy the national Greek character of the Greek people of Cyprus. Neither is it the first to

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fail in this endeavour! For three centuries prior to the British, the Turks (and others for four centuries before them) closed down the Greek schools and suppressed the national Greek culture and did everything possible to destroy the national Greek character of the people. But on the 'fruitful' results of their efforts let an ex-governor of Cyprus, Sir Ronald Storrs, speak. In his book he wrote:

> The Greekness of Cypriots is in my opinion indisputable. . . . No sensible person will deny that the Cypriot is Greek-speaking, Greek-thinking, Greek-feeling, Greek (*Orientations*, p. 550).

As for the 'constitution' which Mr. Hopkinson hoped might attract at any rate a section of Cypriots, the people of Cyprus as a whole learned from their own experience—even before it was confirmed by the case of British Guiana—that these 'constitutions' are only granted and maintained as long as they serve the interests of the imperialist power. Cyprus had a constitution from 1882 until 1931. During all those years not a single bill was passed in the Legislative Council promoting the national interest of the people. In 1931, when taxes proposed by the British Governor were defeated when (for the first time) a Turkish member of the Council voted with the Greeks, the taxation bill was made law by decree. Following the expressed indignation and opposition of the people, even the sham constitution was withdrawn. Since then Cyprus has been ruled directly from Whitehall with the British Governor as virtual dictator of the island. In 1948, a more 'liberal' constitution was offered with a majority of elected members in the Legislative Council but with executive and veto powers again left in the hands of the Governor. This offer was unanimously rejected by the people of Cyprus. It will not therefore be an easy task for Mr. Hopkinson to find 'men of goodwill' to operate the new 'constitution' announced on July 28, 1954, which provides for a majority of *non-elected* members.

These 'last ditch' measures of the Tory Government are not only an insult to the people of Cyprus but have outraged the national feelings of the whole Greek nation, which has forced the monarcho-fascist government of Greece to place the question of Cyprus before the United Nations.

Five days after the announcement by Mr. Hopkinson of the decision to impose a constitution, his representatives in Cyprus announced that the monstrous laws of 1931 which had not been enforced for some years, would be put into force. These laws, violating every human and democratic principle, were denounced by even the most reactionary press in Britain. Their enforcement means the outlawing of every Greek political party in Cyprus whether of

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the right or the left because all support the Union of Cyprus with Greece (Enosis) which is, by these laws, to be treated as sedition. Leaders of political parties advocating Enosis may be imprisoned for five years and ordinary members for two. Newspapers writing about Enosis may be suppressed for three years and their editors imprisoned for five. These laws in practice forbid the circulation of British newspapers which advocate Enosis and even of reports of debates in the House of Commons taken from Hansard. The popular word 'Enosis' which has been the symbol of freedom for many centuries in Cyprus is outlawed. Any Cypriot who dare pronounce it—even in his own home—may be imprisoned for years.

But these monstrous laws, brutal as they are, have had a positive effect: they have exposed imperialism as the common enemy of all Cypriots—so that even anti-Communist Enosis supporters now recognise the correctness of the Cypriot Communists' consistent fight against British imperialism and the need for a united front against imperialism. A solid unity has been achieved embracing every political party and Greek organisation in Cyprus. For the first time, the Archbishop of Cyprus has met with the General Secretary of the People's Party of Cyprus, A.K.E.L., for discussions on the common problems and the measures to be taken to confront them.

The fortnight which followed Mr. Hopkinson's statement constitutes a landmark in the struggle of the people of Cyprus for National Rehabilitation. Nationalist and Communist editors met together and took common action: in protest against the 'anti-sedition' laws they stopped publication of their newspapers for one week. Communist and Nationalist mayors and councillors met, unanimously protested against these laws and demanded the right of the Cypriot people to self-determination.

Above all, unity in action appeared in the whole working class of Cyprus with the peasantry. This was vividly demonstrated in the completely successful 24-hour general strike on August 12, called by trade union organisations of the right and of the left, the right and the left peasants organisations and the Shopkeepers' Association. It was one of the most outstanding political events in the history of Cyprus. This unity in action on the part of workers and peasants, and other sections of the people, coupled with the unity splendidly expressed by the workers and peasants and others in Greece itself for the cause of Enosis is the guarantee of success for the people of Cyprus and Greece in their struggles against imperialism.

The fight of the people of Cyprus for Enosis and the ceaseless struggle of the people of Greece against the Anglo-American

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imperialists and their monarcho-fascist agents in Greece are one and inseparable. It should never be forgotten that the present reactionary régime in Greece was imposed upon the people of Greece by the same British imperialists who today hold Cyprus in subjection. Since the present régime in Greece owes its existence to British intervention in 1944 and U.S. dollars since 1947, it can be readily understood that Premier Papagos and his government brought the question of Cyprus before U.N.O. only as the result of intense and united pressure by the Greek people. In fact, Papagos and his crew do not want Enosis. On May 19, 1954, he made this clear in an interview with an Italian journalist when he said: that Greece did not want Enosis but a constitution for Cyprus and a promise that, after a number of years a plebiscite would be held there.

This achievement of the people of Greece has already had its effect upon the aggressive alliances of the imperialists' satellites. Only a few weeks ago Greece, Turkey and Yugoslavia signed a treaty of alliance: today Turkey threatens Greece with war itself if the appeal to U.N.O. on Cyprus is proceeded with. All American subterfuge has not succeded in concealing from the Greek people that this 'great ally' not only does not support the Greek demand for Cyprus but is working night and day to prevent the question being discussed. When on September 23 the Steering Committee decided by nine votes to three with three abstentions to place the question on the agenda of this Ninth General Assembly, it was worthy of note that the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, Burma, China, Cuba, Ecuador, Iceland, Siam and Syria voted in support, whilst imperialist France and Australia voted with Britain against; the U.S.A.—the 'great ally' of Greece—abstained. The other 'great ally' of monarcho-fascist Greece, Turkey, voted against when the General Assembly endorsed the decision by 30 to 19 with 11 abstentions. Thus the whole Greek nation can see who are their friends and who are their potential enemies. The Soviet Union and the People's Democracies are thus recognised as champions of the rights of all oppressed peoples.

There are people who ask why the Cypriots want to 'unite with a monarcho-fascist Greece' and lose the 'benefits' of British colonialism. They should remember the following. Governments come and go but the People always remain. A united people of Greece and Cyprus can fight much more effectively for the fulfilment of their aspirations than when they are divided as they are at present. For the heroic people of Greece it is not the first time that they suffer under a dictatorship like the present one. Recent history shows that

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during the past 34 years at least eight dictatorial régimes and reactionary kings have been routed by democratic struggle.

As for the propaganda of the British Colonial Office on the 'prosperity' of Cyprus, let the facts speak for themselves. In 1938, an official investigation into 'the needs of those governed' revealed after a definite minimum average of subsistence had been fixed that 25 per cent. of the people were existing below that level, 50 per cent. just at that level and only 25 per cent. above it. In 1951 alone, 3,809 people emigrated to Britain and other parts of the British Empire. After 76 years of British rule, the bulk of the peasants still use primitive wooden ploughs for tilling their land. The total sum of Cyprus' national income is £25,838,000. Of this profits amount to £18,428,000 (51.43 per cent.); interest to £899,000; rents to £4,892,000 ; wages and salaries to only £11,614,000. Profits, interest and rent take 67.59 per cent. of Cyprus' national income!

Now the question of Cyprus has been placed before U.N.O. The Cypriots have no illusions about the hazards entailed. The people of Cyprus know that the fulfilment of their aspirations depends on the united and systematic struggle of the Cypriot and Greek people, the support of the democratic forces of the whole world and not least on the solidarity of the great labour movement in Britain. Under the glorious banner of unity, inspired by the symbol of the general strike of August 12, the Cypriot people has prevented the British colonialists from, as yet, actually operating the monstrous laws announced on August 2. The Greek people have forced the monarcho-fascists to act against their will and take the question to U.N.O. Now, at this very moment, the monarcho-fascists of Greece and the U.S. imperialists are conspiring with the British to find a 'solution' and (after putting it last on the U.N. agenda) so to betray the aspirations of the Greek nation for Enosis.

Without underestimating the great difficulties which face the Cypriots in their struggle on the road ahead, they are advancing, confident that the day of national rehabilitation cannot be delayed for long. There can be no other solution of the national and economic problems of Cyprus than the one proposed by the Cypriot people. That is, Enosis—the Union of Cyprus with Greece, without conditions, and without granting military bases to any foreign power. Any other 'solution' such as 'constitution', so-called self-government, or any other compromise with imperialism is not only dangerous and harmful to the people of Cyprus and the Greek nation as a whole, but it constitutes a threat to world peace and affects the well-being of the British people.

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HENRY FIELDING (1707-1754)

JOHN SAVILLE

HENRY FIELDING was born at Sharpham Park, near Glastonbury in the county of Somerset, on April 22, 1707. His father, who later became a General, was descended on the male side from the first Earl of Desmond, and his cousin was the well-known Lady Mary Montagu. His position in English society is also shown by his education. After a private tutor, he went to Eton ('Public schools', he once wrote, 'are the nurseries of all vice and immorality'), and after Eton he studied law at Leyden in the Netherlands. After a fairly short stay there, Fielding came to London, where he quickly established a reputation as a playwright with his comedies and burlesques.

Henry Fielding was a man of immense physical vigour. He had an enormous zest for life and was remarkably powerful and active. A brilliant conversationalist, a great story teller and a striking wit, he plunged into the life of London of the 1730's with tremendous gusto.

His first play was produced in London, at Drury Lane, in 1728, and his second in 1730. There followed many other writings for the stage, of which the farces and the burlesques are the most successful. In these Fielding found a wonderful vehicle of expression for his high spirits, his sense of extravagance, and his faculty of irony. His earlier comedies were in the declining tradition and fashion of Congreve; but his later writings for the stage and especially his burlesques introduced new positive influences into the contemporary theatre. Particularly in the famous *Tom Thumb,* Fielding mocked the absurdities of the dramatic conventions of his day; he was, as has been well said, 'on the side of sanity in English drama'. In another, and more important respect, Fielding was an innovator. He introduced contemporary themes into his writings, and his later burlesques are biting political comments on his own times. Fielding vigorously opposed Sir Robert Walpole and the corruption which surrounded his Government. In 1736 he took over the Little Theatre in the Haymarket, formed his own company of actors and produced his *Pasquin: A Dramatic Satire on the Times.* This was followed in the next year by *The Historical Register of 1736.* So keenly edged were his political allusions, so powerful his satire against a corrupt administration that Walpole became alarmed. The government passed the Licensing Act of

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1737 establishing Censorship of stage plays. Fielding was muzzled. For over 200 years now playwrights on the British stage have been muzzled; and political satire has had to find other channels. The British theatre in chains is presumably an example of what Mr. Attlee praises as 'the rule of law': at any rate neither he nor his predecessor Ramsay Macdonald ever sought to remove the fetters, despite the eloquent pleas from their own party voiced by Bernard Shaw.

Following the introduction of this political control of the stage, mainly but not only for that reason, Fielding's writings for the stage virtually came to an end. He had married in 1734 and was a devoted husband and father. His finances, given the extravagances and the generosity of his habits, were always shaky. To build a more reliable career for himself, he entered the Middle Temple in 1737 and was called to the Bar three years later in 1740. In this same year he began work in the field in which he was to achieve his lasting reputation. In November of 1740 Samuel Richardson published *Pamela,* which was extraordinarily well received. To Henry Fielding, sprung from the gentry, it seemed a particularly revolting example of middle-class hypocrisy: it provoked him into writing his famous parody, *The History of the Adventures of Joseph Andrews, and of his Friend Mr. Abraham Adams.* He had found the *genre* in which his genius could blossom, and his novels remain his greatest monument.

Fielding is more than a great novelist. His bi-centenary is being celebrated because he represents so much that is best in the traditions of English society. He was a whole man. Not only in his superb commentaries on contemporary life but in his practical reforming work as a magistrate, he shows himself to us as a great humanist, a man of large-hearted sympathy with a profound hatred of cruelty and oppression. Sympathy by itself is never enough, and it is because Fielding went beyond sympathy to understanding that we salute his memory today. His astonishing insight into the workings of society raises him far above the level of a novelist of manners. Here is how he summed up the class basis of society:

> Mankind are first properly to be considered under two grand divisions —those that use their hands, and those that employ the hands of others. The former are the base and rabble; the latter, the genteel part of the creation. The mercantile part of the world, therefore, wisely use the term *employing hands,* and justly prefer each other as they employ more or fewer; for thus one merchant says he is greater than another because he employs more hands.

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This is no isolated expression of Fielding's views. In the same *Jonathan Wild* from which the above quotation is taken, and which is one of the great satires in English literature, Fielding's account of the election in Newgate jail is a penetrating as well as an amusing commentary on the nature of parliamentary democracy in bourgeois society. Just as the electorate has always been bamboozled into a support of their exploiters, so the debtors in Newgate gave their votes to one or other of the rival groups of thieves who had organised the election for their own benefit. Their object was to extract as much as could be squeezed out of their debtor supporters.

> What may seem more remarkable is that the debtors, who were entirely unconcerned with the dispute, and who were the destined plunder of both parties, should interest themselves with the utmost violence, some on behalf of Wild, and others in favour of Johnson. So that all Newgate resounded with WILD *for ever*! JOHNSON *for ever*! And the poor debtors re-echoed *the liberties of Newgate*! which, in the cant language, signifies *plunder*, as loudly as the thieves themselves.

It is this appreciation of the fundamental hypocrisy of bourgeois society that lifts Fielding above his contemporaries. Moreover, his understanding of the social consequences of poverty was strikingly in advance of his age. He never forgot these basic and fundamental facts. Parson Adams, in *Joseph Andrews*, says to the swindling steward Peter Pounce, 'Hunger and thirst, cold and nakedness, and other distresses which attend the poor, can never be said to be imaginary evil'. In all his ideas, and in all his social activity, Fielding was part of the glorious tradition of the Age of Enlightenment to which nothing human was alien. He made no attempt to soften or tone down the penetrating criticisms he had of the evils around him; but because Fielding and the bourgeois humanists believed in the power of man both to change himself and the world about him (although their assumptions were still idealist), he and they had none of the neurotic anxiety which afflicts the liberals of today. Tom Jones, in the novel of that name, fights for the positive things for which Fielding stood; and it is this assurance and calm, despite his frank avowal of the social problems of his time, that is an outstanding characteristic of Fielding's writings.

Fielding became a Justice of the Peace for Westminster towards the end of 1748, and in the next year was chosen by his fellow magistrates to be chairman of the Middlesex quarter sessions. In these offices, he was remarkably successful. Not the least of his services towards the organisation of an efficient and just legal system was his refusal to continue the practices which had made

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the magistracy a byeword for corruption. Fielding once wrote that a magistrate in his position could count upon an income of £500 a year, 'the dirtiest money on earth' in his own phrase; and by refusing to mulct those who sought legal redress of their wrongs he established new standards of probity and uprightness.

Vanity, hypocrisy, cruelty and unkindness, in their private and their social manifestations, were the objects of Fielding's hatred and scorn throughout his life; and his own virtues of courage, honesty and a wonderful sense of humour through much tribulation and many years of illness remained with him to the end. His appetite for life remained undiminished to the end, and in the posthumously published account of his voyage to Lisbon, which he made just before his death, the fire of his enquiring and compassionate mind burns as brightly as ever. The qualities of Henry Fielding can be a source of inspiration to those who under different conditions are carrying on the world's struggle today.

FROM THE *LABOUR MONTHLY* OF 25 YEARS AGO

TOWARD THE BIRTH OF THE *DAILY WORKER*

The announcement that a serious campaign has now at last been begun to establish a revolutionary workers' daily in England is welcome news, and none too soon. The achievement of this project, not merely as the issue of an organ of expression, but as the linking up of the militant working-class forces throughout the country in a daily and continuous fight, will mean the most important step forward yet in the realisation of the new stage of struggle. . . . The main task now is the campaign for the daily, the work of preparation and propaganda for the daily, the raising of finance and arousing of interest, the winning of support in the working-class organisations and in the factories, the first steps to the building up of the mass movement which we shall need to organise around the daily.

From *A Workers' Daily*, by R.P.D., November, 1929.

(*The 'Daily Worker' made its first appearance on January 1, 1930.*)

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THE INDIVIDUAL IN SOCIALIST SOCIETY

E. V. TEMPEST

ARE personal relations impoverished, or are they enriched? The question is of first importance. The ultimate aim of Socialism is 'more life and fuller' for the individual—a richer experience and deeper sensitiveness. Until we in the West have achieved this Socialist change, we can know little at first hand of its effect on personal relations.

This is where recent Soviet experience can help us supremely. The great realist tradition of Gogol, Tolstoy and Gorki is being developed brilliantly by a group of young post-war Soviet novelists. Their theme is the 'changing man' of Socialist society. The following works are recommended as typical, and because they are accessible to English readers through recent translations: *

Galina Nikolayeva	..	*Harvest* (Stalin Prize 1950)
Antonina Koptayeva	..	*Ivan Ivanovich* (Stalin Prize 1949)
Vsevolod Kochetov	..	*The Zhurbins*
Pavel Luknitsky	..	*Nisso* (1953)

Their work is typical because their attitude to life is broadly based on two assumptions which seem to be accepted by all other post-war Soviet writers. The first assumption was well expressed before the Revolution by Maxim Gorki:

> The more varied and profound the ties which unite the individual with the life of the community, the stronger he is in spirit, the more interesting to himself and useful to others, and the more energetic in the struggle for the improvement of the conditions of human existence. Personality is the blazing summit of an enormous pyramid of experience: the broader its base, the more of this life experience it will absorb, the brighter and more beautiful and inextinguishable will be its glow.

This idea is not new in the world. The 'shared cup' of sacrifice and brotherhood is familiar in the early Christian tradition. But these Soviet writers are describing a socialist society in which the idea has become concrete reality, tested in action.

The second assumption is 'the healing power of the Collective'. Neither in failure nor success does the individual stand alone. Outside and all round him is the developing life of the community, of which he is an integral part. By identifying himself with that life,

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he loses self-centredness and egotism, and gains discipline and strength from the common purpose.

The 'healing power of the Collective' is difficult for the average English reader to understand. It is alien to our 19th century tradition, which has exalted 'self-help' and 'rugged individualism' into social virtues. The importance we have attached to charity and pity, other-worldliness and all the religious consolations, has helped us to ignore social responsibility in its widest and deepest sense. We regard brotherhood as fractionally possible in small groups—our church, masonic lodge, circle of friends and of course our family. Apart from this 'Brotherhood Ltd.', we accept a world of infinite division—race, class and creed, with different measures of health, wealth, education and social status. We talk, of course, of unity and peace, but fear too much of it may deprive man of what we call 'strength' and 'freedom'. For 'strength' we today rely on the atomic bomb, that dread symbol of division. And our 'strength' is for use against all who stand for the 'collective' principle, whose symbols are those of constructive labour.

Another powerful illustration is given in Tolstoy's masterpiece, *Anna Karenina*. Tolstoy describes the last hours of Anna's life before suicide, when 'she saw things clearly, as by a sort of clairvoyance'. As she drives to the station, the street scenes reveal to her, one after the other, the chaotic frustration of life without common purpose, and therefore without dignity. But throughout the novel, not only in these last pages, Tolstoy gives an almost unendurable picture of the individual's tragic isolation in a society incapable either to help or heal.

Harvest, by Galina Nikolayeva

We now enter a different world—life in post-war Russia. It is still a world of struggle, but on a different plane. 'Growth' in all its forms, individual and collective, is the dominant theme. In working for the collective well-being, the individual grows in discipline, strength, and sensitiveness, and in short becomes more 'interesting' (as Gorki said) to himself and to others.

The story opens with the unexpected return to his village of Vasili Bortnikov in 1946. Believing him dead, his wife Avdota had married again. Vasili's return to the village upsets a deeply happy relationship between herself and Stepan and the two children. But after the first shock, agreement came quickly. Vasili summed it up briefly. 'Well, Stepan Nikitch, I can stay, you go. We have two children, they can't be hacked in halves. We have fought on the

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same fields, and are going to raise crops on the same fields. Take whatever you want. . . . It's the only way.' And Stepan leaves the village.

Vasili is elected Chairman of the Collective Farm, a difficult job owing to war-time loss of livestock and equipment, and shortage of labour. Instead of patient forbearance, he dictates. His harsh tone alarms the Party Secretary. 'That won't get you anywhere. A skipper without a crew is nobody, but a crew without a skipper is still a crew. It's a Soviet man, a friend, you're dealing with, and you've got to win him over by convincing him, not forcing him.' Although Vasili seems to make all mistakes possible in personal relations, including those with his wife Avdota, he is not an unsympathetic character, and he is saved from failure by the singleness of purpose and tireless energy with which he serves the 'Collective'.

Ivan Ivanovich, by Antonina Koptayeva

Dr. Ivan Ivanovich is head of a hospital in the Soviet North. His wife Olga joins him after the death in Moscow of their two-year-old child, 'determined to devote her life to him and lighten his work'. But Olga has no specialist training, and feels lonely and frustrated in a pioneering settlement where everyone has a job. Her husband is absorbed in his work and blind to his wife's problems. At last Olga (thanks to the advice and encouragement of Tavrov, an engineer) finds an outlet in her gift for writing. Eventually she leaves Ivan Ivanovich, and lives with Tavrov.

'What a hackneyed plot, and what conventional types!' But the English reader quickly realises that the plot, in the hands of Antonina Koptayeva, has become something more important than an *intrigue à trois*. The crux of the book is the clash of loyalties and of the differing standards of social responsibility in the three characters. What makes the book valuable is that these clashes between individuals are seen as part of the wider experience which enriches the individual and the community.

The Zhurbins, by Vsevolod Kochetov

This first novel succeeds in being many things. First, it is an exciting story, full of romance and drama, of the 'daily round and common task' in the life of workers in a big ship-building yard. It is also a family chronicle, covering three generations. The experiences of the Zhurbin family give the human background to historical developments in Russia during the last 75 years. But the supreme value of Kochetov's novel lies in its picture of the growth of the

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'Collective' spirit amongst thousands of ship-building workers. This 'workers' Collective' is as solid an achievement as the hulls of the ships they are building. In a short epilogue the author describes a brief ceremony after the launching of one of the ships. An old foreman gives to a young worker a poster from the first years of the Revolution. 'There's your photograph, Alexei, treasure it. I've treasured it for more than a quarter of a century.' The poster gives the powerful figure of the Soviet worker, 'striking with a heavy hammer at chains encircling the globe. He is striking with all his might, forging forward, never retreating. As he strikes, the iron links split and fall apart. And the continents resound with his mighty blows'.

The novel ends with two contrasted scenes which symbolise the unity and strength of the 'working Collective'. The worst storms and floods for 50 years threaten the ships in the stocks and the new constructions. The ship-building 'Collective' stands the strain with discipline and courage. Disaster is averted. A few weeks later the first ship is launched from the new yard, the result of new methods and technique. Agafya Karpova, mother of many of the Zhurbins, and wife of Ilya, watches the ship successfully clearing the slipway and 'floating in the fairway of the Lada, majestic and calm'. Agafya has been a pervasive and powerful influence throughout the story. She hears behind her two people talking:

> But when the ships aren't launched from the stocks any more, when they use the dry docks, you won't see the same beauty.
> No, but there'll be more ships.

Nisso, by Pavel Luknitsky

Pavel Luknitsky is a Soviet scientist who before the war took part in many geological expeditions to Tadjikstan. He studied the life and traditions of the Tadjik people in the almost inaccessible valleys of the Pamir mountains, and was impressed by their energy and intelligence, though brutalised by poverty. Soviet power had not then penetrated into this 'lost world of the High Mountains'. During his first expedition in 1930, the author was captured by the 'basmachi'. These mercenaries of the still powerful feudal lords and petty khanates had been supported for many years by foreign agents from across the border. He used such experiences as material in this book. 'The characters and events are taken from life, and the reader can rely on the authenticity of my picture.' (Author's preface.)

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It is a big claim to make for any book that it will be an inspiration for generations to come. But most readers will, I think, agree that in the case of *Nisso* the claim is justified. This story is an epic of human courage and self-sacrifice in that noblest of endeavours—the liberation of the so-called backward races of mankind. The author limits the action to a remote corner of Tadjikstan in south-east Asia, but his characters and their experiences are of universal significance. The exploitation of backward races can be ended. The 'mind-forged manacles' of fear and superstition can be broken. *Nisso* shows the way.

The girl Nisso is the incarnation of the indomitable spirit of her people. Her mother was killed in efforts to escape from slavery. Nisso's only friends in childhood were the animals; she ran about the village naked till she was eight years old and almost eligible for marriage. At the age of 13 she was sold to the Khan. The Khan was full of fears. The tide of Soviet power was everywhere rising in the valleys. 'These Soviet enemies of the Pre-Ordained are planting foolish dreams of happiness in hearts that had never known rebellion, like fire among dry faggots. . . . For thousands of years we have laughed at their dreams of happiness. But now the infection of unrest has penetrated to my people—and everything on earth is collapsing.'

Nisso fled from the Khan to the mountains, where she existed on roots and grasses. She saved herself from starvation by eating stale millet cakes in a mountain Mazar, sacred to the spirits of the dead. This impious deed liberated her from some of the spiritual terrors of the High Mountains. At last she reached the village of Siatang, where she was saved from death, at the hands of superstitious peasants, by Sho-Pir, the only Russian representative in the Siatang valley. Sho-Pir was an ex-Red Army man, whose Russian name was Medvedev.

Sho-Pir believed in the people. 'The Khans have trampled them down as pigs trample grass. But they will rise again'. He was carpenter and doctor, tailor and hunter, specialist on farming and irrigation—a character of heroic mould, servant of the people. The materialist basis of his faith in Man saved his leadership from cheap demagogy and egotism. One by one he gathered round him like-minded men and women. In spite of mistakes and disasters, the story is a triumphant demonstration of Man's power to control nature and thereby to change himself, and build with incredible speed a New Life for the future.

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Book Reviews

FAIRGROUND MIRROR

Anarchy and Order, by Herbert Read. (236 pp. Faber & Faber. *16s.*)

SIR HERBERT READ, the titled anarchist, has collected together a number of his essays published between 1938 and 1953 and republished them as *Anarchy and Order, Essays in Politics.* It is tempting to treat Sir Herbert simply as a bit of a joke. He combines an irremediable woolliness of mind with a naive enthusiasm for the latest thing—or what *was* the latest thing—in art and philosophy. Freud, surrealism, personalism, existentialism, a touch of Christianity, a whiff of anthropology, a dab of Marxism: all is grist to Sir Herbert's mill. Opening his book at random one is quite likely to come on some lively and enlightening sentences on almost any subject. But within a couple of pages one will be trapped in a bog of nonsense so dense and so capricious that the more commonplace distress-signals are entirely inadequate. Sir Herbert's mind resembles one of those absurd yet ghastly halls of mirrors that are to be found in fair-grounds. The most innocent feature becomes moment by moment distorted and each new turn or movement brings some new twist of grotesque irrelevance. Everything is there, one might say, everything save one touch of nature.

I would give one example of the type of argument which characterises Sir Herbert's writing. On p. 62 he refers to the suicide of Mayakovsky quoting the poet's farewell message in which he wrote of his 'love boat smashed against mores' (conventions). Read's comment is 'The Revolution had evidently not created an atmosphere of intellectual confidence' and he goes on to say 'Mayakovsky's death merely proves that in this respect (the fate of poetry) the new civilisation of Russia is only the same civilisation in disguise'. It is a silly shallow comment because, of course, one man's suicide could not in any event prove any such thing, and no-one who has thought seriously about revolution for ten minutes can expect that within a few years a socialist revolution will solve all the personal problems and neuroses of individual people, especially those people who spent their formative years before the change. But to leave the question at that would be to do Sir Herbert more than justice. Within a few pages (66-7) he is back on the ball again. In the U.S.S.R. 'the artist is treated like any other kind of producer, and compelled to deliver a specified output in a specified time' (quite untrue). 'Art cannot be produced in such conditions, but only a dry and ineffectual semblance of it. Compelled to produce under such conditions, the more sensitive artist will despair. *In extremis,* like Mayakovsky, he will commit suicide'. Note that Mayakovsky's suicide is now attributed not to the failure of the revolution to help him solve his love problems but to the alleged demands made on him as an artist, a twist in the argument which ignores the previously produced evidence and for which no new evidence whatsoever is produced. But even this is not the bottom. Twenty-five pages later (p. 91) we come upon: 'It soon appeared, however, that the "liquidation" of such poets as Mayakovsky was to be justified on aesthetic grounds. They were accused of formalism, individualism, etc. . . .' So by now, within half an hour's reading, the suicide has become 'liquidation' and Mayakovsky, included in 'they', presented as hounded to death and his

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death justified on the grounds of the artistic inadequacy of his work—he, the most loved and honoured of all Soviet poets. This is the sort of thing which these days is allowed to pass muster among our reputable intelligentsia—provided, of course, it is directed against communism or the Soviet Union. Woolliness is far too polite a term for such a performance.

ARNOLD KETTLE

PHILOSOPHICAL THUGS

Pragmatism — Philosophy of Imperialism, by Harry K. Wells. (221 pp. Lawrence & Wishart. *15s.*)

'PRAGMATISM' is not a word to which most of us react in the same immediate way as we do to such words as 'fascism' or 'McCarthyism'. The truth is that although we are constantly meeting with examples and applications of pragmatism, many of us do not recognise them as such and have only a hazy notion of what the philosophy of pragmatism is. This is a pity, for pragmatism is the favourite philosophy of American imperialism. It is admirably adapted to the functions of 'justifying' the dropping of napalm or hydrogen bombs on defenceless civilians, the lynching of Negroes and other manifestations of the American Way of Death.

Dr. Wells, a young American lecturer and writer, and a Marxist, has traced the development of pragmatism as 'the main-line philosophy of U.S. capitalism in the era of imperialism'. He reminds us of the picture painted by Marx of what happened in England and France after the conquest of political power by the capitalist class:—

> Thenceforth, the class-struggle, practically as well as theoretically, took on more and more outspoken and threatening forms. It sounded the knell of scientific bourgeois

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economy. It was thenceforth no longer a question, whether this theorem or that was true, but whether it was useful to capital or harmful, expedient or inexpedient, politically dangerous or not. In place of genuine scientific research, the bad conscience and the evil intent of apologetics.

One might perhaps object that 'hired prize-fighter' is too lenient a term for the philosophical thugs who exercise these functions in our day. In the United States a very important contingent of these philosophical thugs have been, and are, the high priests of pragmatism — William James, Oliver Wendell Holmes, John Dewey and the rest—with their glorification of expediency and usefulness (for the capitalist class) as substitutes for science and truth. 'An idea is "true" so long as to believe it is profitable to our lives', said William James. And it is not hard to see how the Eisenhowers and Dulleses of this world can use such a theory as a cover for any crime they consider it profitable to commit.

Dr. Wells shows how pragmatism has been applied to serve the interests of capitalism in the fields of history, education, law and psychology, and he demonstrates how, while waging a phony war against discredited ideas, the pragmatists, defending a doomed and desperate ruling class, have in fact come to the rescue of all that is bankrupt and rotten. He exposes the nature of this philosophy of reaction which denies truth, knowledge, principles and science, and which teaches that the end (the defence of capitalism) justifies any means, however horrible and inhuman.

Dr. Wells' book helps us to know our enemy.

R. MALCOLM

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FIRST-CLASS HANDBOOK ON NEW RENTS ACT

Tenants' Guide to the 1954 Rents Act. (24 pp. Labour Research Department. *6s.*)

IT was highly important that the Trades Union Congress last month carried a resolution for a nation-wide drive against the Act, which imposes what amounts to a formidable cut in real wages. But drives take time to mount; meanwhile the flood of increases begins; thousands are in immediate need of help to defend themselves. The first need of the tenant under notice is to know what he is up against and what he must do at once.

A number of guides to the Rents Act have appeared; but it is only that by the Labour Research Department which is entitled, significantly, the *Tenants'* Guide. For that is exactly what it is; here is no mere setting out of formal 'rights and duties'. This guides the tenant step by step through the barbed wire entanglements of legal jargon, whose complexity itself serves to keep the landlord—and his lawyer—in clover, and the tenant in bewilderment. It is a marvel of compactness; half the pages and half the price of the Transport House guide. It explains in simple language where to check upon the increase, how and when to challenge the landlord's claim to have done repairs, and the like. Over and over again it has to caution the tenant against attempting to take advantage of alleged safeguards without advice and support of tenants' association or trade union. A special merit is that while it can be followed by an individual tenant it is detailed enough to be a first-class handbook for study by the bodies which will have to organise the fight.

L.R.D.'s old Tenants' Guide was a weapon highly valued by the last generation; the present Guide will equally serve the turn of the generation which is to solve the housing problem, among others, once and for all.

ANGELA TUCKETT

USEFUL MANUAL

Introduction to Typography, by Oliver Simon. (118 pp. Penguin Books. *3s. 6d.*)

THIS book of explanations and instructions, written by the editor for many years of *The Fleuron,* can be read with pleasure by all who admire craftsmanship. But if read, studied and applied by those who at any time write for the newspaper, periodical and book press, the result would be of considerable advantage to editors, publishers and, above all, working printers.

P.A.

The Imprisonment and Defence of

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calling for *'the utmost diplomacy, tact and at times for violent and acrimonious argument to retain basic principles'*. How keenly, then, he welcomes to the branch those younger trade unionists who already have a grasp of trade union principles and traditions. Note—whether you agree with my correspondent or not—note that he doesn't blame the younger people: he blames our generation who have been guilty of *'a signal failure in the past, when we should have been training younger men to carry on. However, we did not, and now the omission is being felt'*. What does the rising generation say to that? A young electrician friend to whom I spoke of this comments: 'One experience the older men haven't had is two years of conscription and all the troubles of settling back when you get home. You send the Midget along to my branch and I know the young lads will respond, once they get it in their hands. *Don't preach to us; just give it to us'*.

Scoring at Scarborough

WHAT a tremendous response to our Labour Party Conference Special Number! Not least amongst the delegates themselves at Scarborough, where the regular readers together with those who bought L.M. on the spot numbered over 120. Delegates were especially keen to read the article by their fellow delegate Ben Parkin M.P., who so ably seconded the resolution against Nazi rearmament. The mover R. W. Casasola for the Foundryworkers now writes on page 499. His article should help those reporting back to recall vividly the mood of conference, and enable all who were not present to see 'where we go from here'.

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